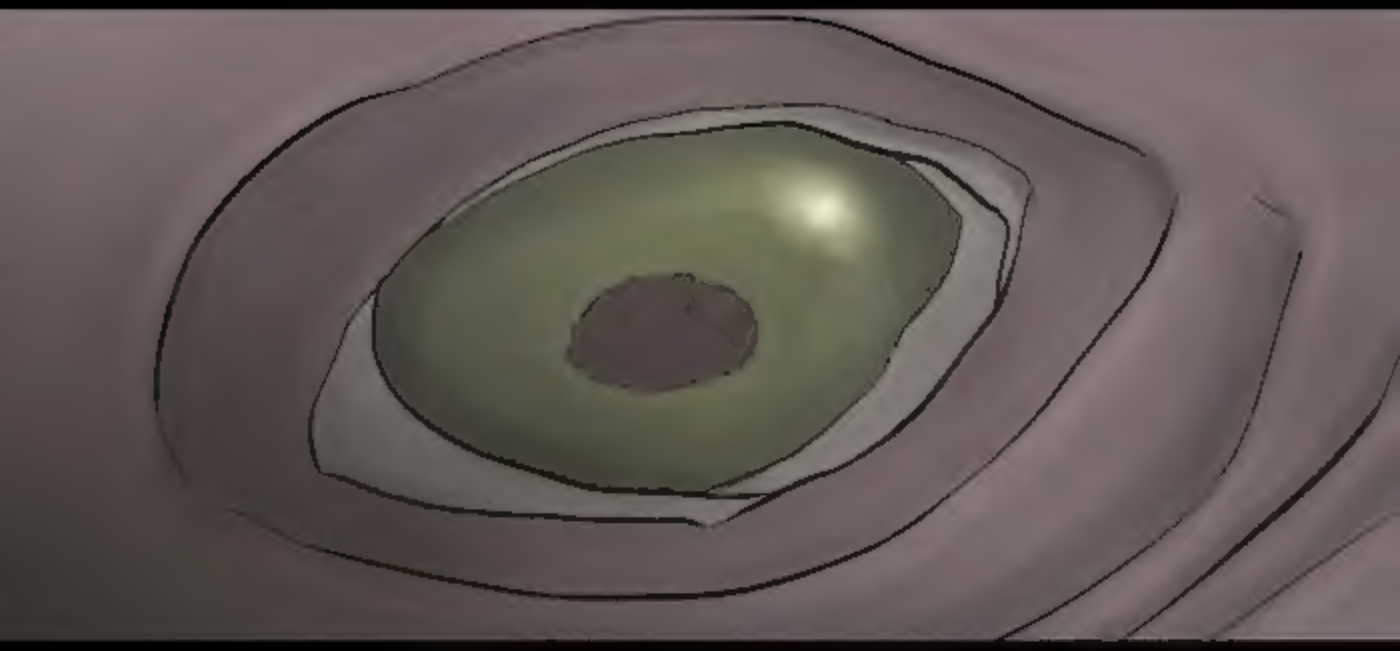
WHING WHING WHING WHING WHING WHING WH

ING WHING WHING WHING

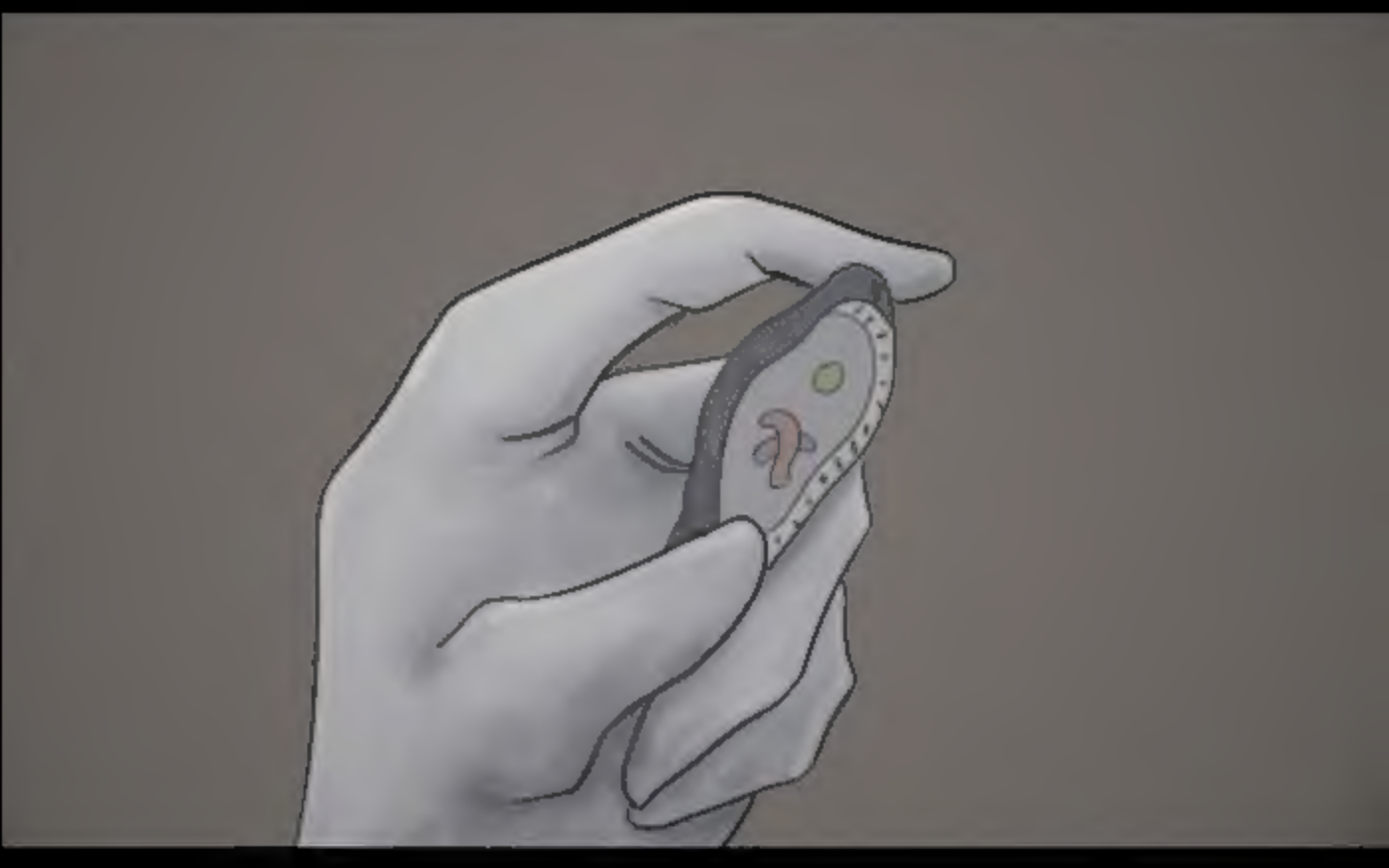


THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE PROJECT ORDERED THE RESEARCHERS TO MINIMIZE ANY STIMULI

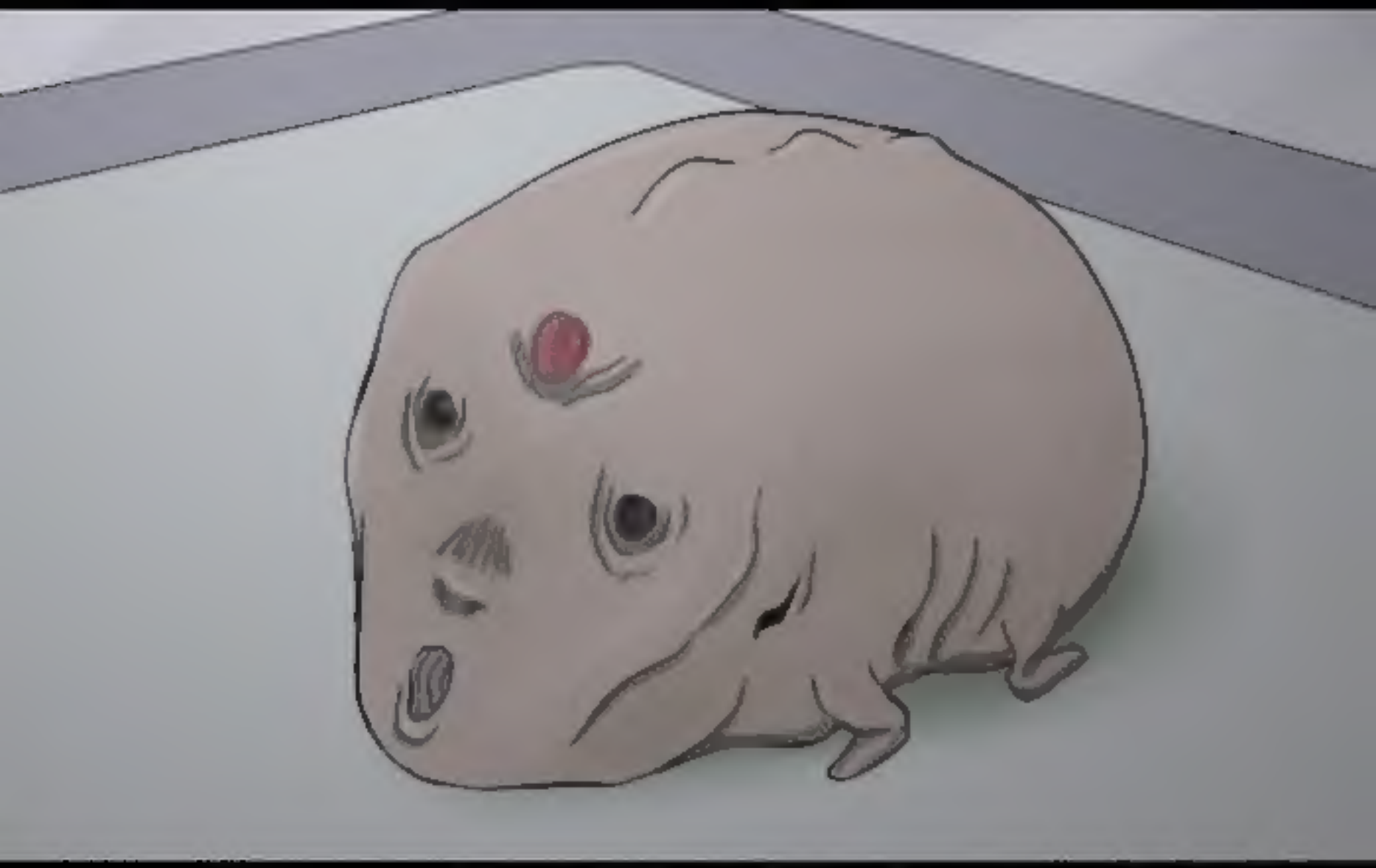
TO ALPHA SO THAT THEY COULD PERFORM AN AUTOPSY AFTER HIS DEATH,

BUT THE HEAD RESEARCHER THOUGHT DIFFERENTLY.

BONAZOI!
ENJOY YOUR MEAL.



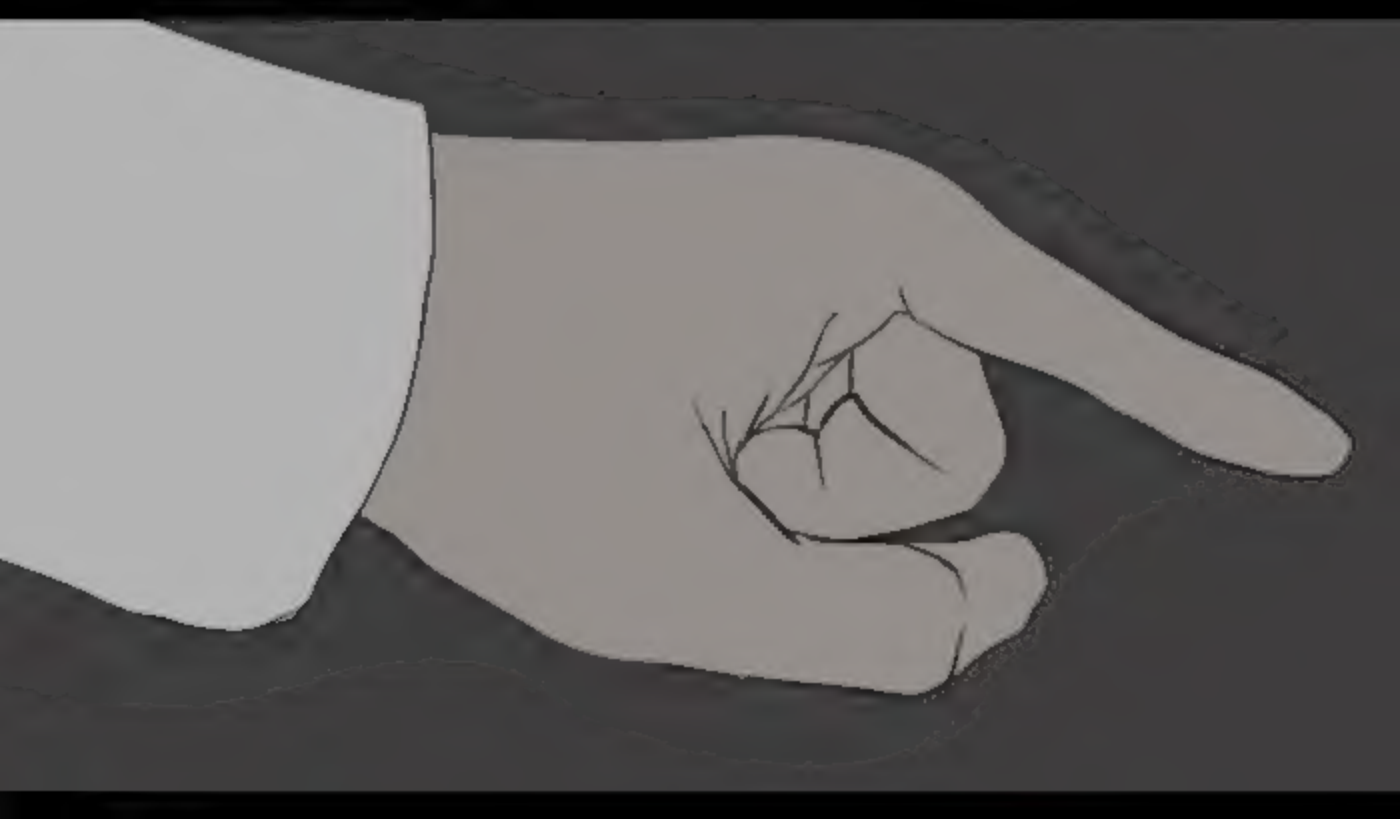
HE FINALLY STABILIZED IN HIS CURRENT FORM.

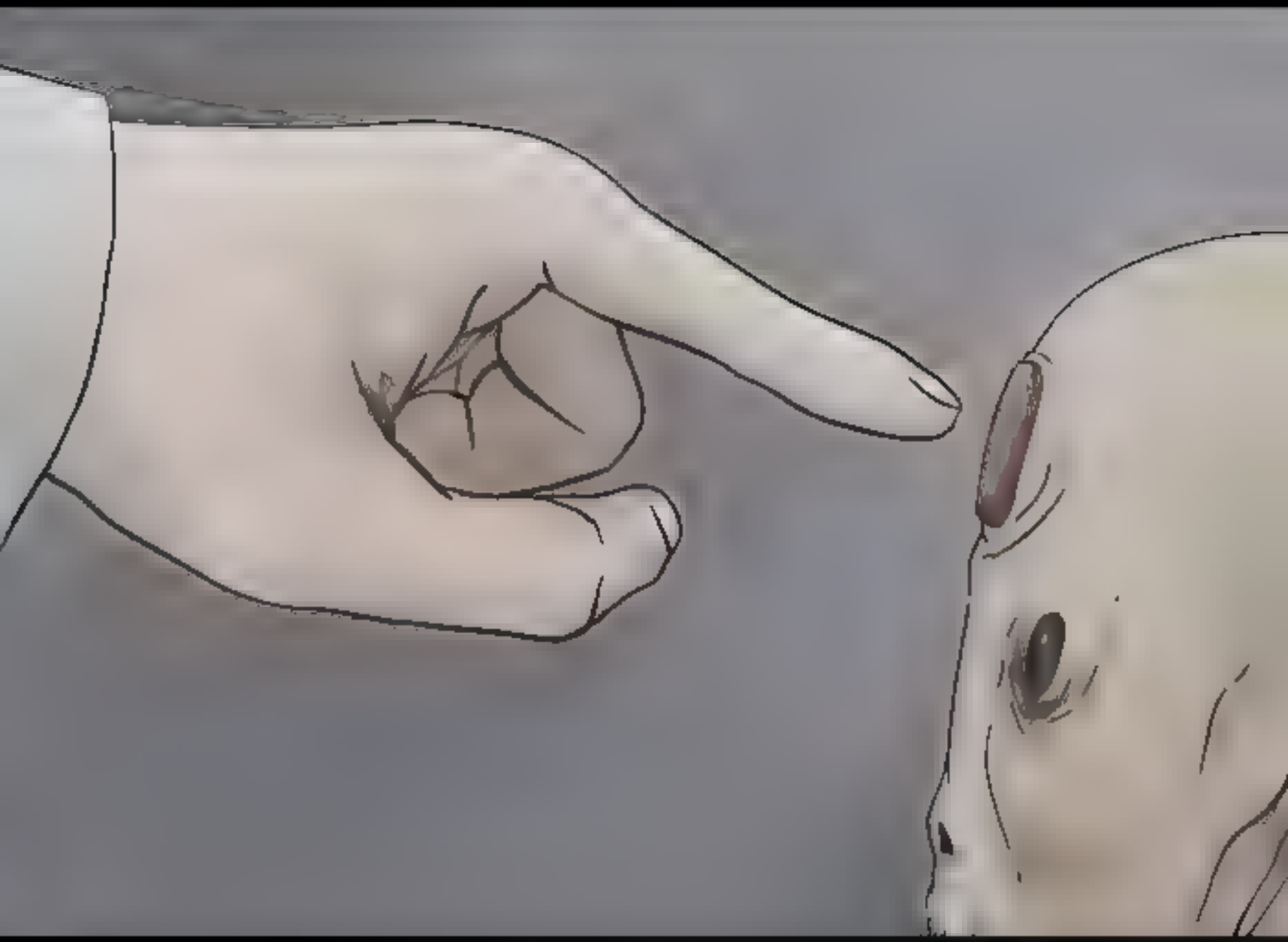


AFTER ALL OF THE ORGANS NECESSARY
FOR HUMAN SURVIVAL ATROPHIED

WHICH PROVIDES BALANCED NUTRITION AND IS CONVENIENT TO CONSUME,

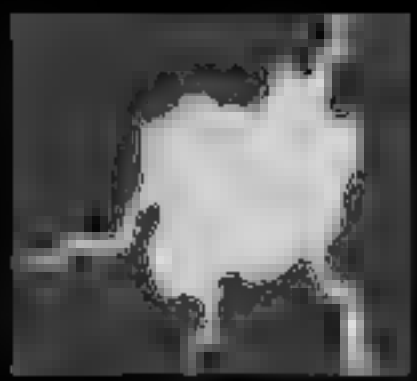
DIGGING EVER DEEPER AND GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THE MATTER WAS THE RIGHT THING TO DO.

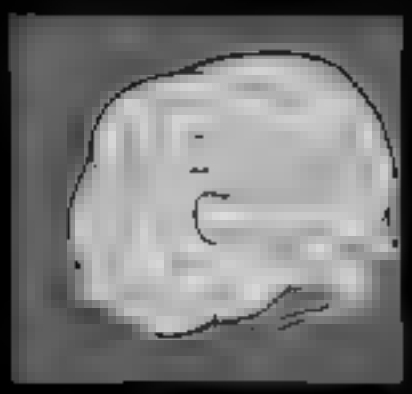




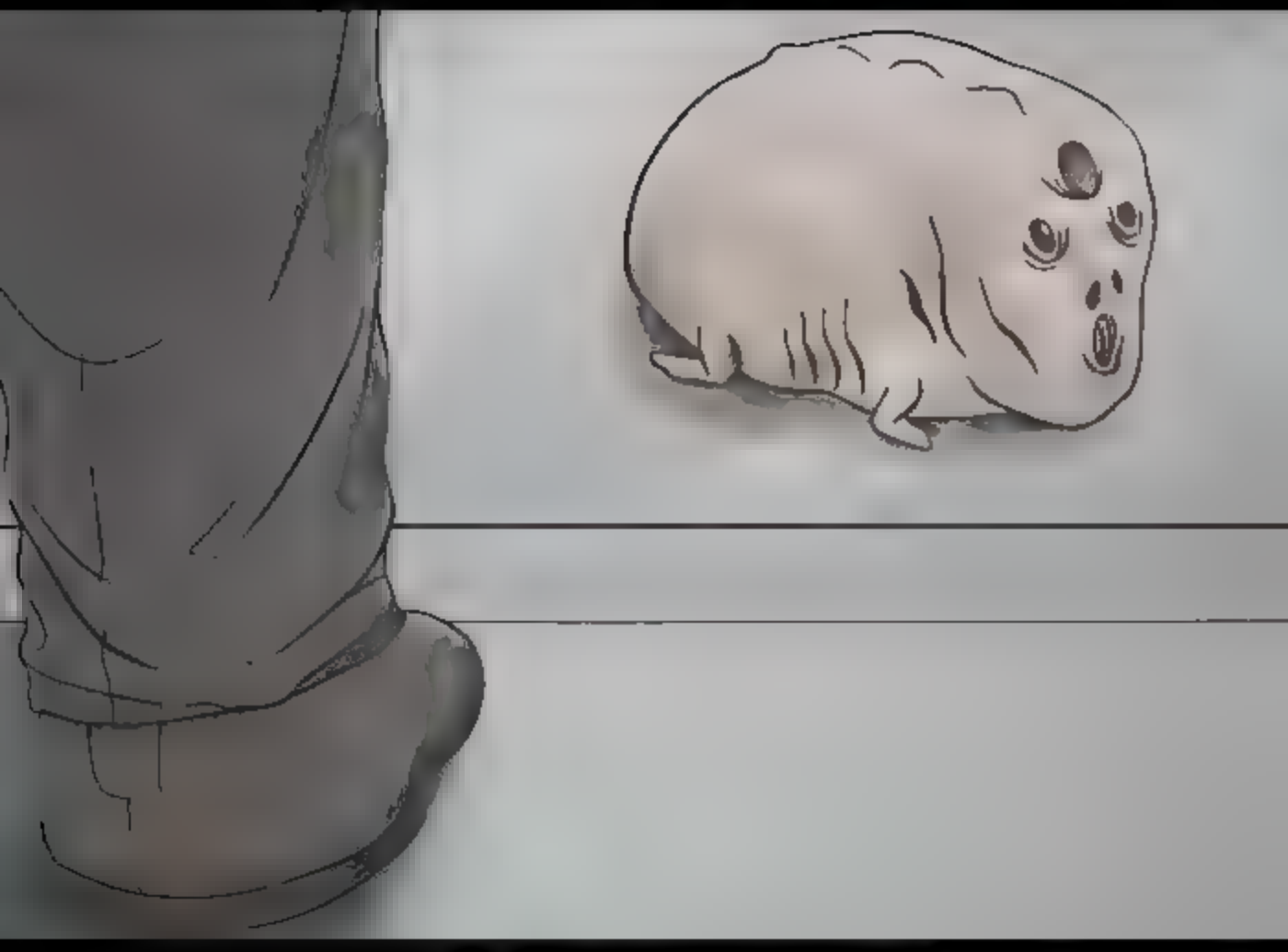
WE WILL HAVE LIMITED
ACCESS TO FOOD
AND WATER

WE ESCAPED FROM
THE THREAT OF
AN INVADING PATHOGEN





OUR COGNITIVE CAPABILITIES
WILL DEVELOP RAPIDLY



WE CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO IMAGINE WHY HUMANS ALONE ACQUIRED SUCH FORMIDABLE INTELLIGENCE AS COMPARED WITH OTHER CREATURES WHICH EVOLVED UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS.

"THEIR EVOLUTION AFTER THAT WAS JUST AS WE'VE STUDIED."

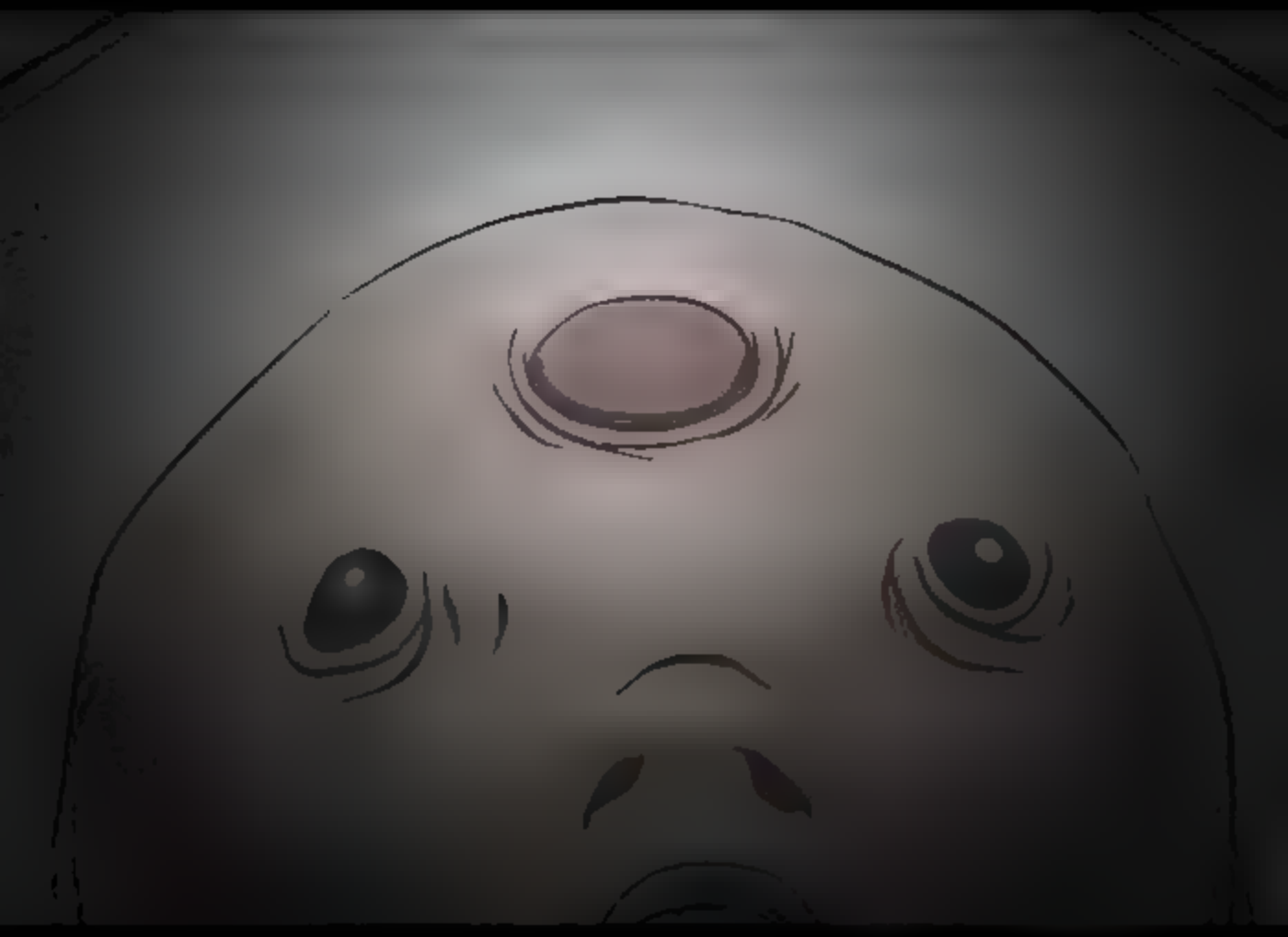
"IS THE ULTRA-REFINED HUMAN CRYSTAL"

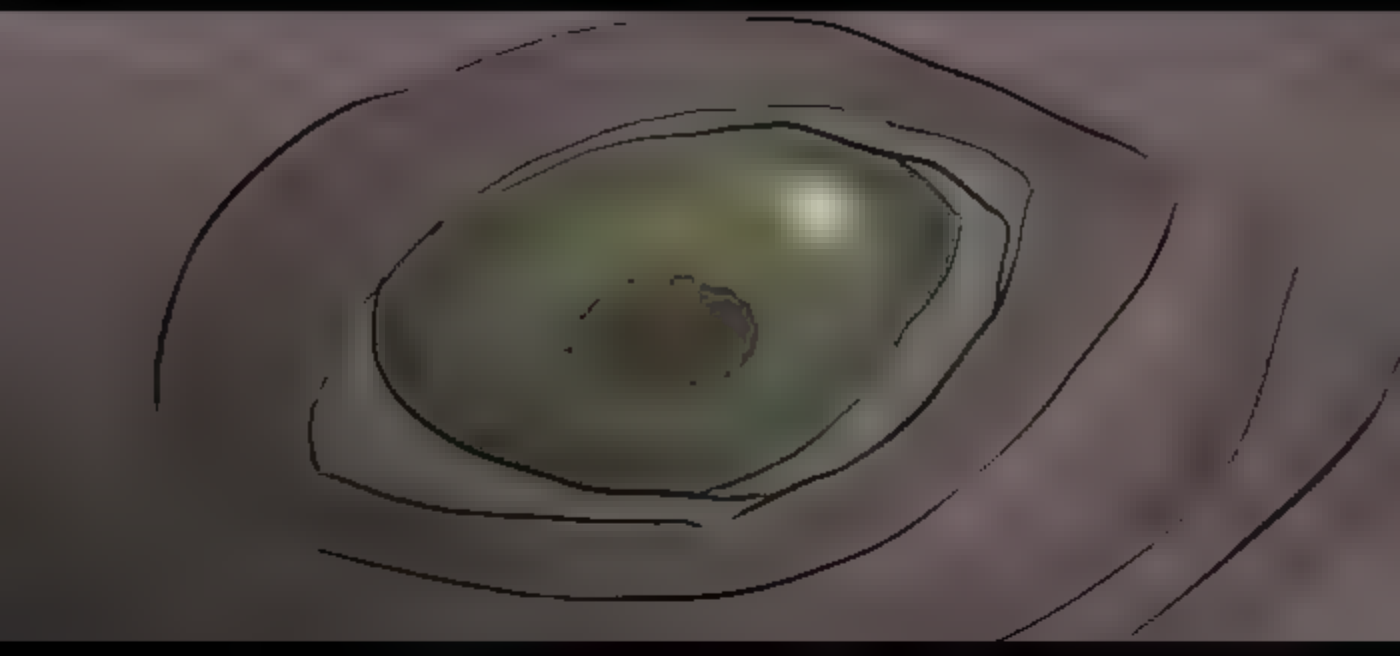
"OMEGA"

THUS THE HEAD RESEARCHER PERSUADED
AND CONVINCED HIMSELF.

FRIDAY
FORBIDDEN TALES
禁曜日

0135. ALPHA (4)



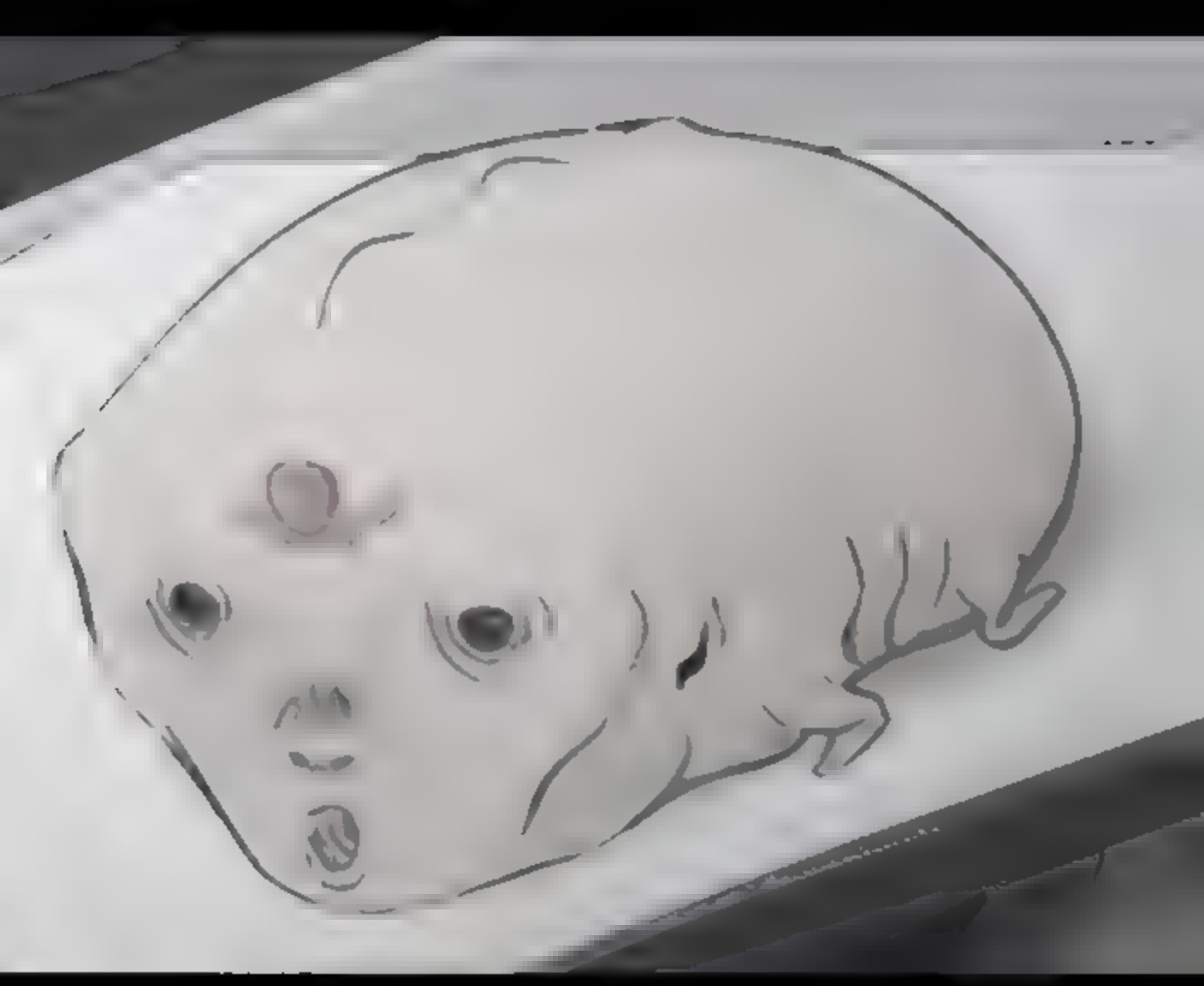


BUT FOR THE CREATURES
UNDERGOING THESE PROCESSES,

"THERE WAS NOT EVEN CLOSE TO ENOUGH GRAY MATTER TO NOURISH OUR SPECIES."

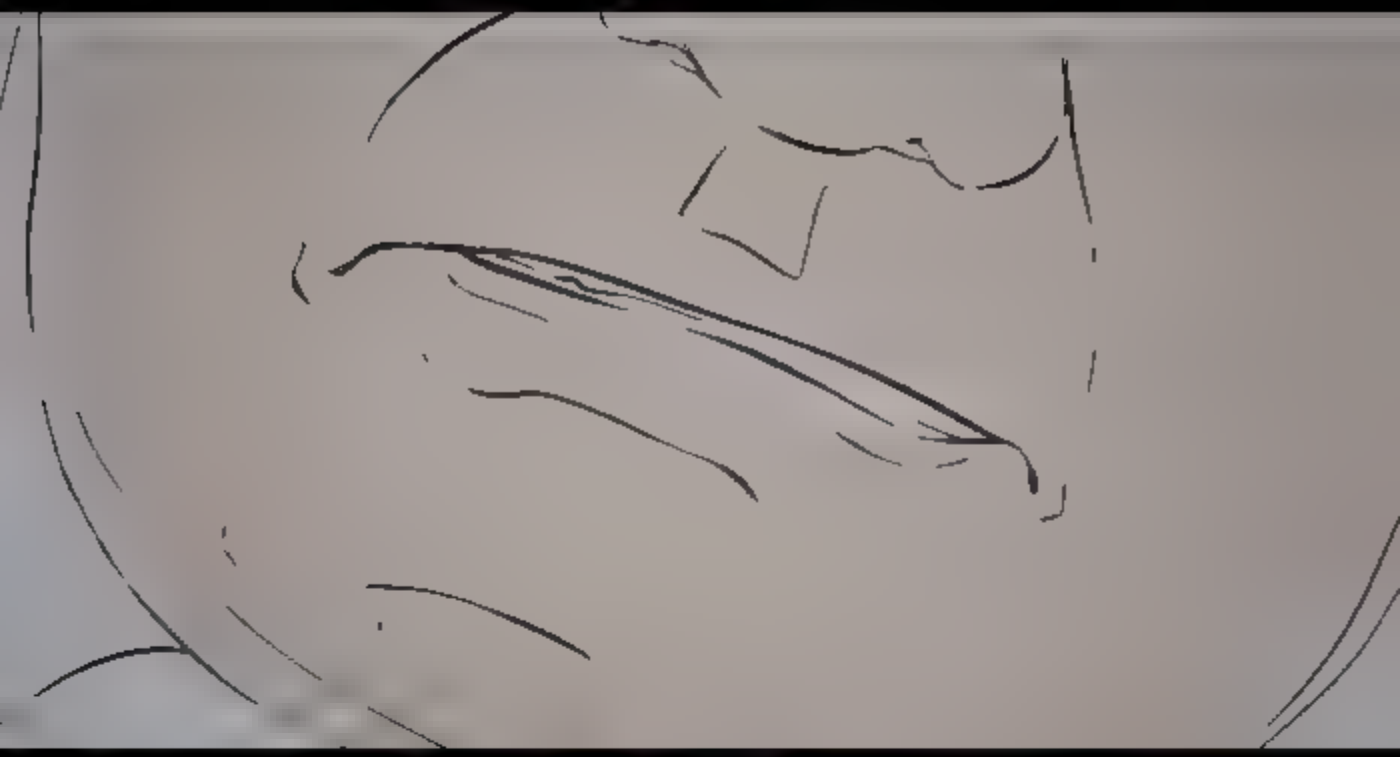
THAT BUTTON ENDLESSLY TEMPTED THE HEAD RESEARCHER WITH THE OVERWHELMING

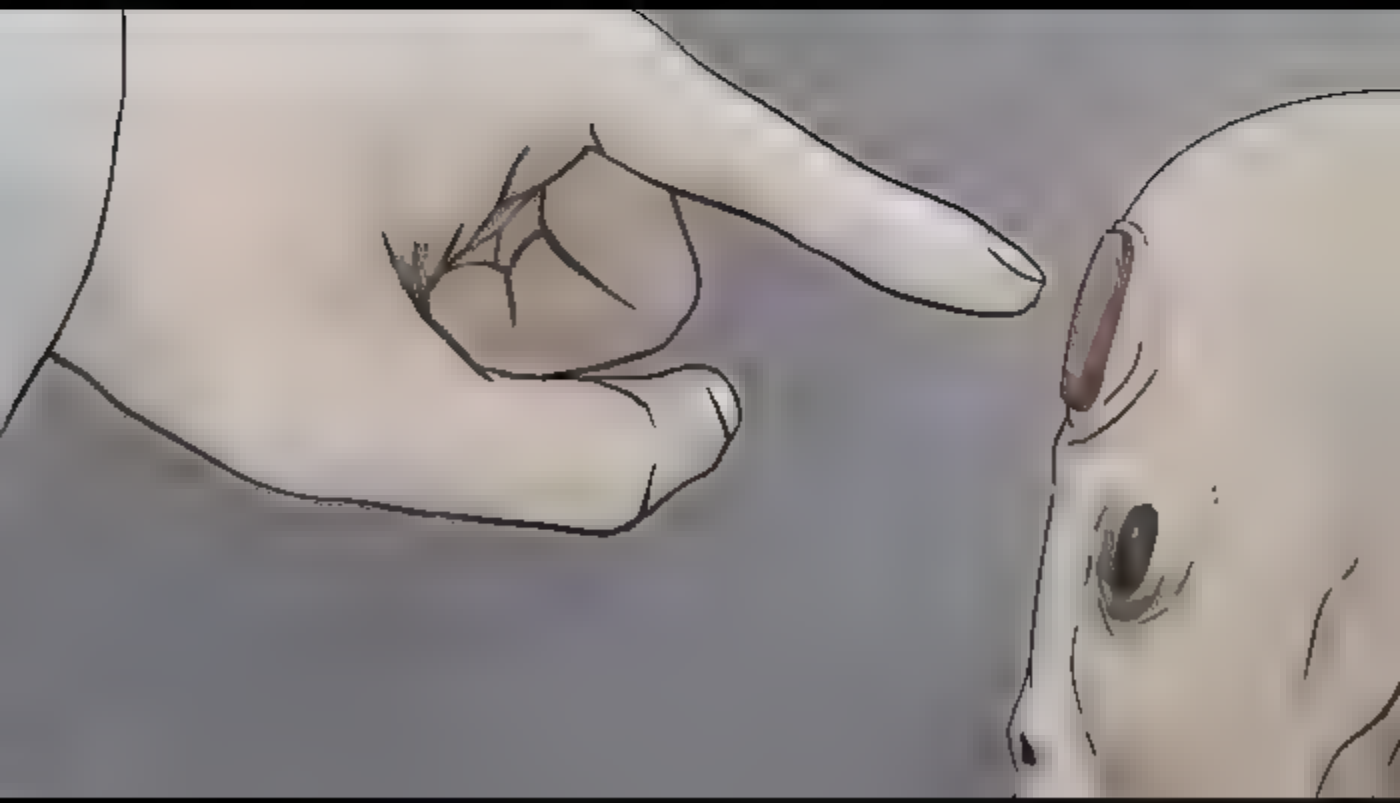
URGE TO FIND OUT WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF HE PUSHED IT.

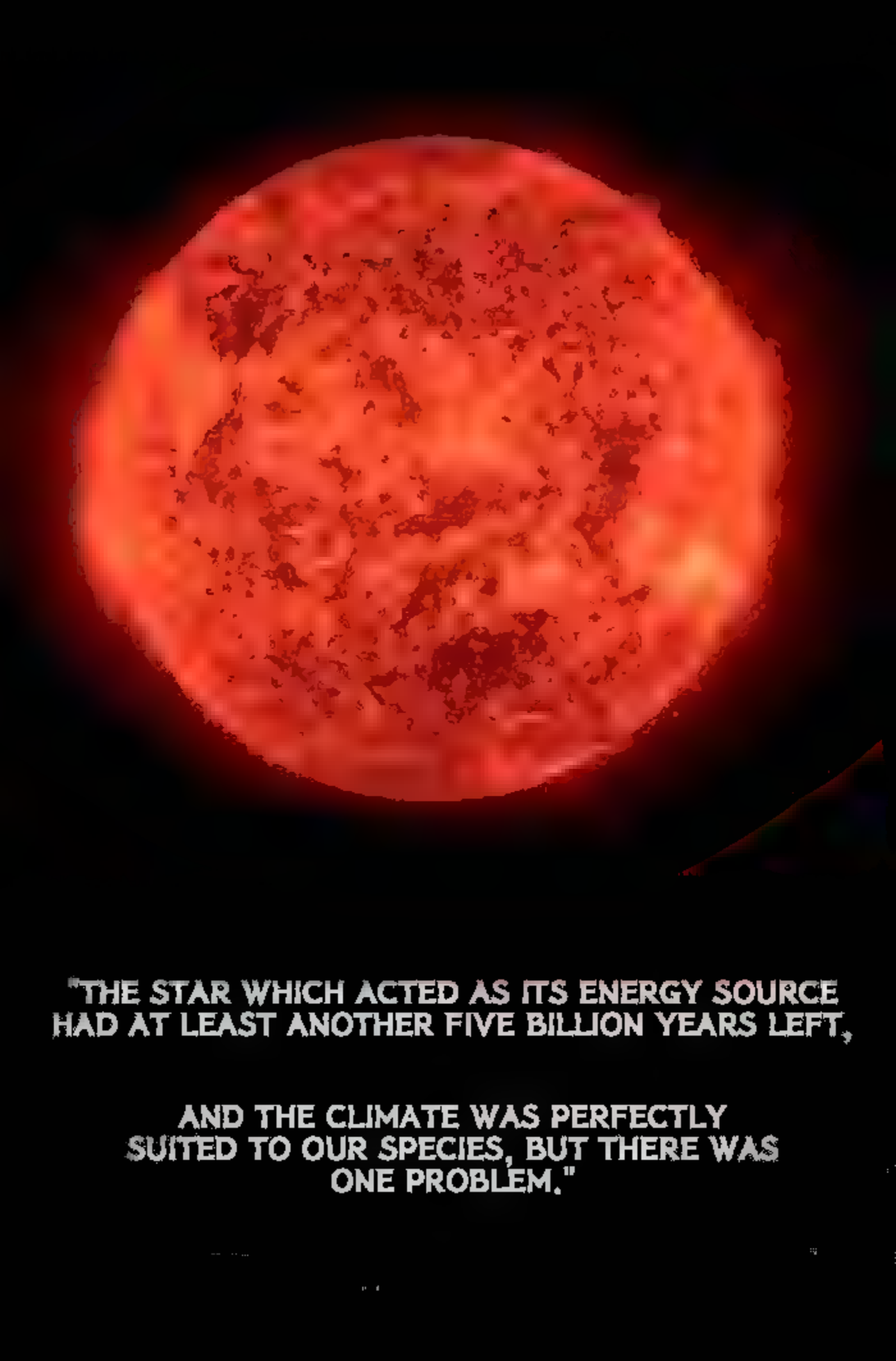


AFTER CHANGING FORMS COUNTLESS TIMES

SEVEN YEARS AFTER ALPHA'S BIRTH

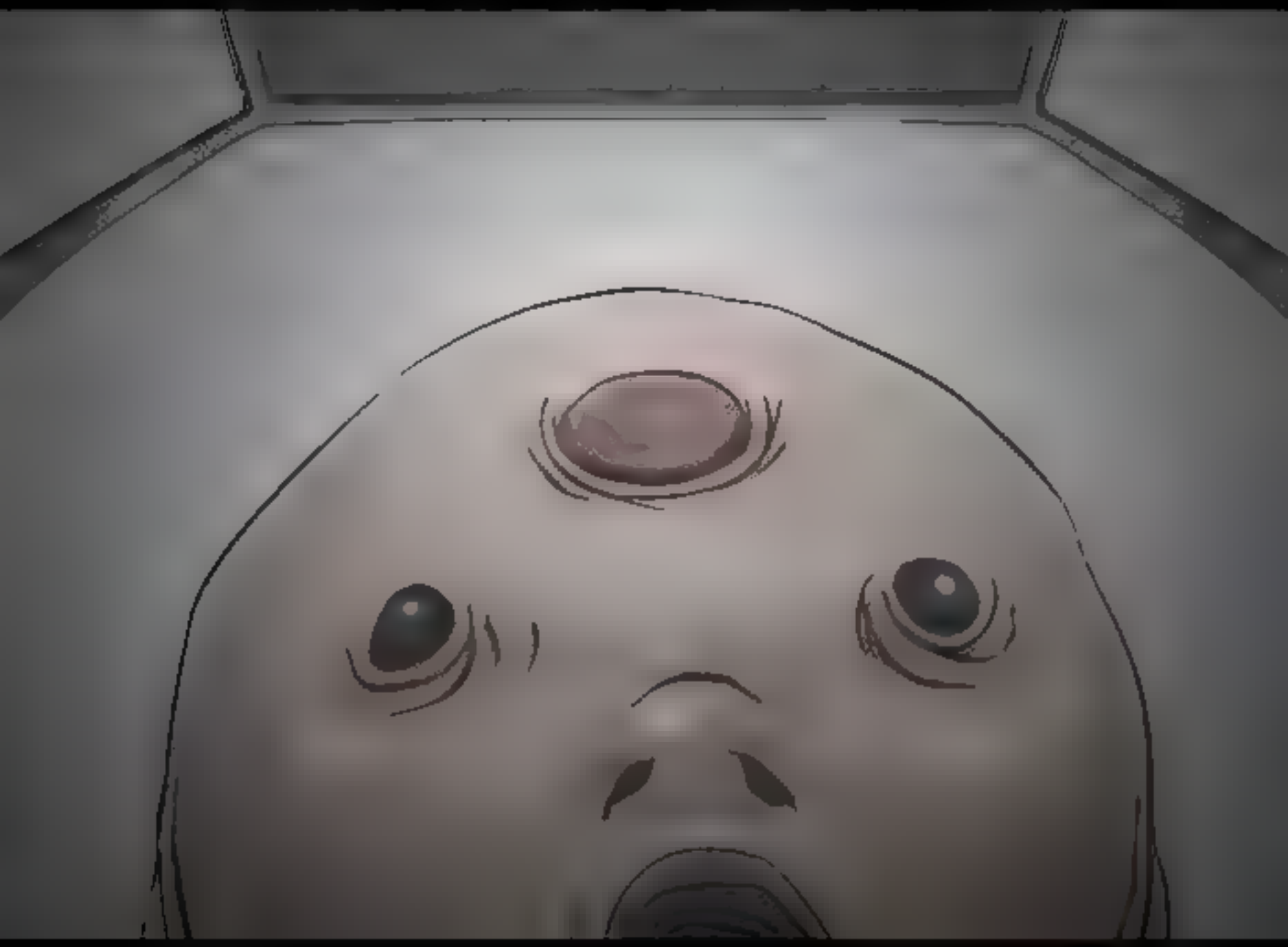





"THE STAR WHICH ACTED AS ITS ENERGY SOURCE HAD AT LEAST ANOTHER FIVE BILLION YEARS LEFT,
AND THE CLIMATE WAS PERFECTLY SUITED TO OUR SPECIES, BUT THERE WAS ONE PROBLEM."

THERE WAS NO WAY FOR SCIENTISTS IN
THE CURRENT GENERATION TO FIGURE OUT

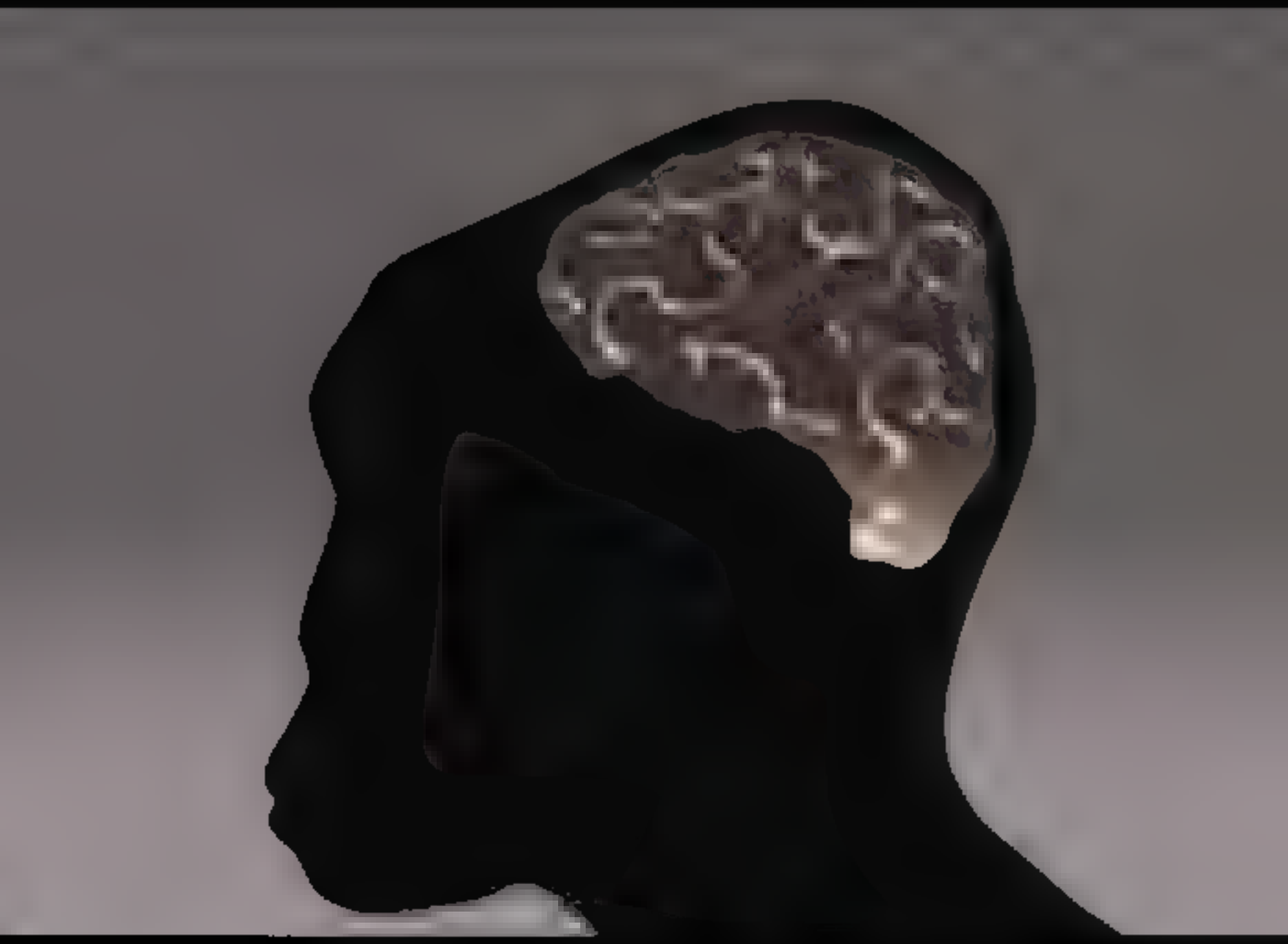
WHY WE WOULD EVOLVE IN SUCH A WAY.



THAT BUMP,
WHICH LOOKED ALMOST LIKE Å KIND OF BUTTON,

AFTER ALPHA STABILIZED IN HIS CURRENT FORM,

ALL THE RESEARCHERS DID FOR SEVERAL YEARS
WAS PERIODICALLY CHECK HIS VITAL SIGNS.



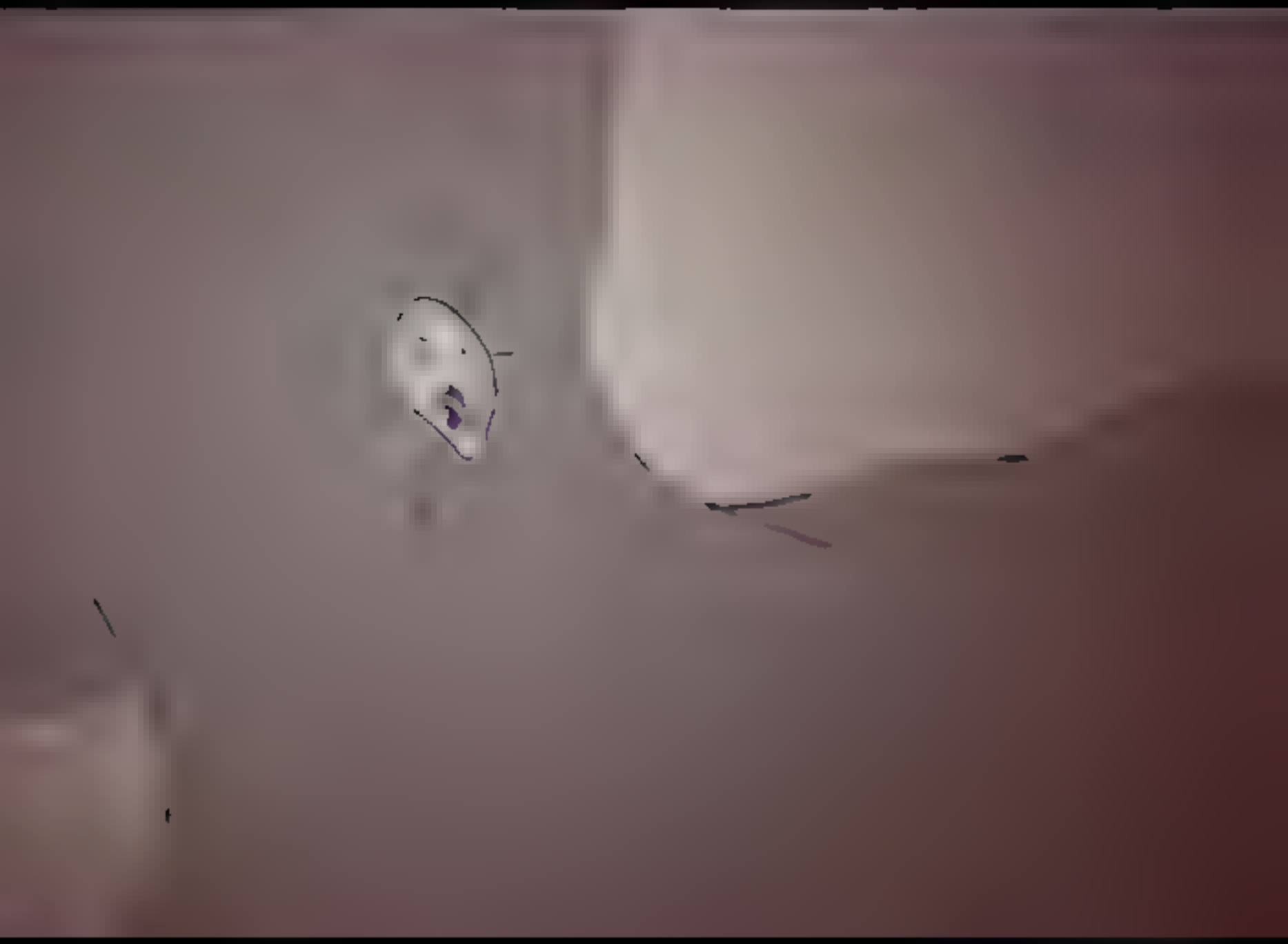
"AS I MENTIONED BEFORE,
A SLIGHT SIDE EFFECT TO THIS WAS THAT

THEY ENDED UP WITH A LEVEL OF INTELLIGENCE
WHICH DWARFED THAT OF ANY OTHER SPECIES."

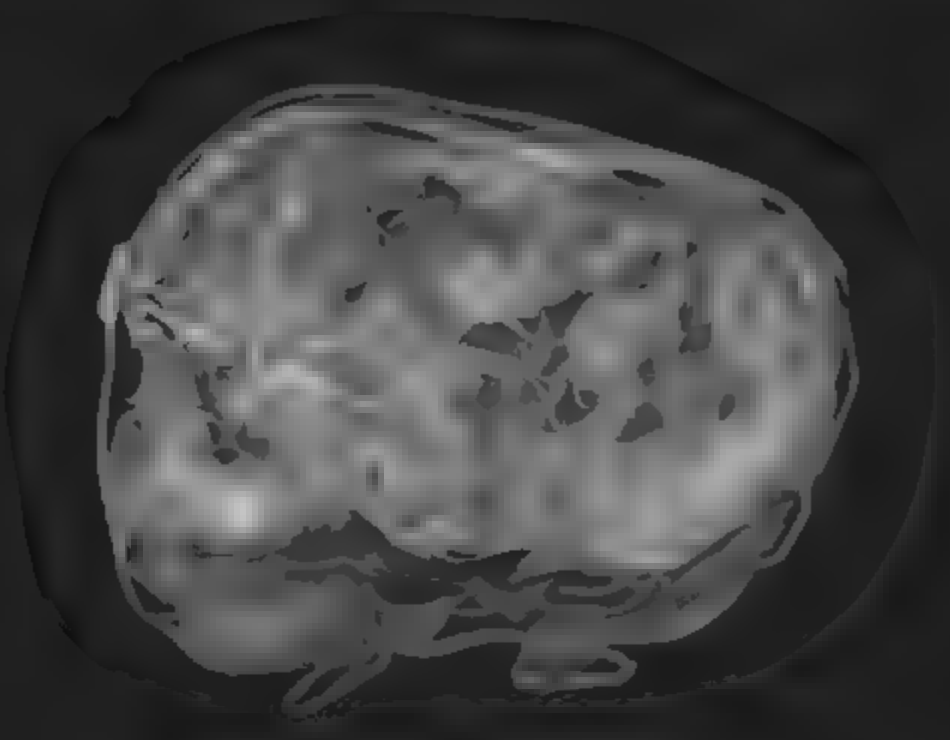
IT'S NOT LIKE THIS RESEARCH WILL EVER BE RELEASED
TO THE SCHOLARLY WORLD, LET ALONE THE PUBLIC

AND EVEN IF THE INFORMATION WERE LEAKED,
NOBODY WOULD BELIEVE IT ANYWAY.

"SO BEFORE OUR ANCESTORS LEFT THE PLANET,
THEY PLANTED SEEDS THERE FOR THEIR DESCENDANTS.
IN OTHER WORDS, US,"



"WHO WOULD EVENTUALLY FIND
THIS PLACE AGAIN IN THE FUTURE."



UNDER THE 'HYPOTHESIS' THAT
ALPHA IS REVEALING THE FUTURE,

THE ONLY DIRECTIONS IN WHICH RESEARCHERS
COULD 'GUESS' THAT HUMAN EVOLUTION
WOULD PROGRESS WERE:

MOBILITY WILL BE LIMITED BY
OUR ENVIRONMENT

"IN THE VERY DISTANT PAST,
OUR ANCESTORS LIVED AS HUNTERS."

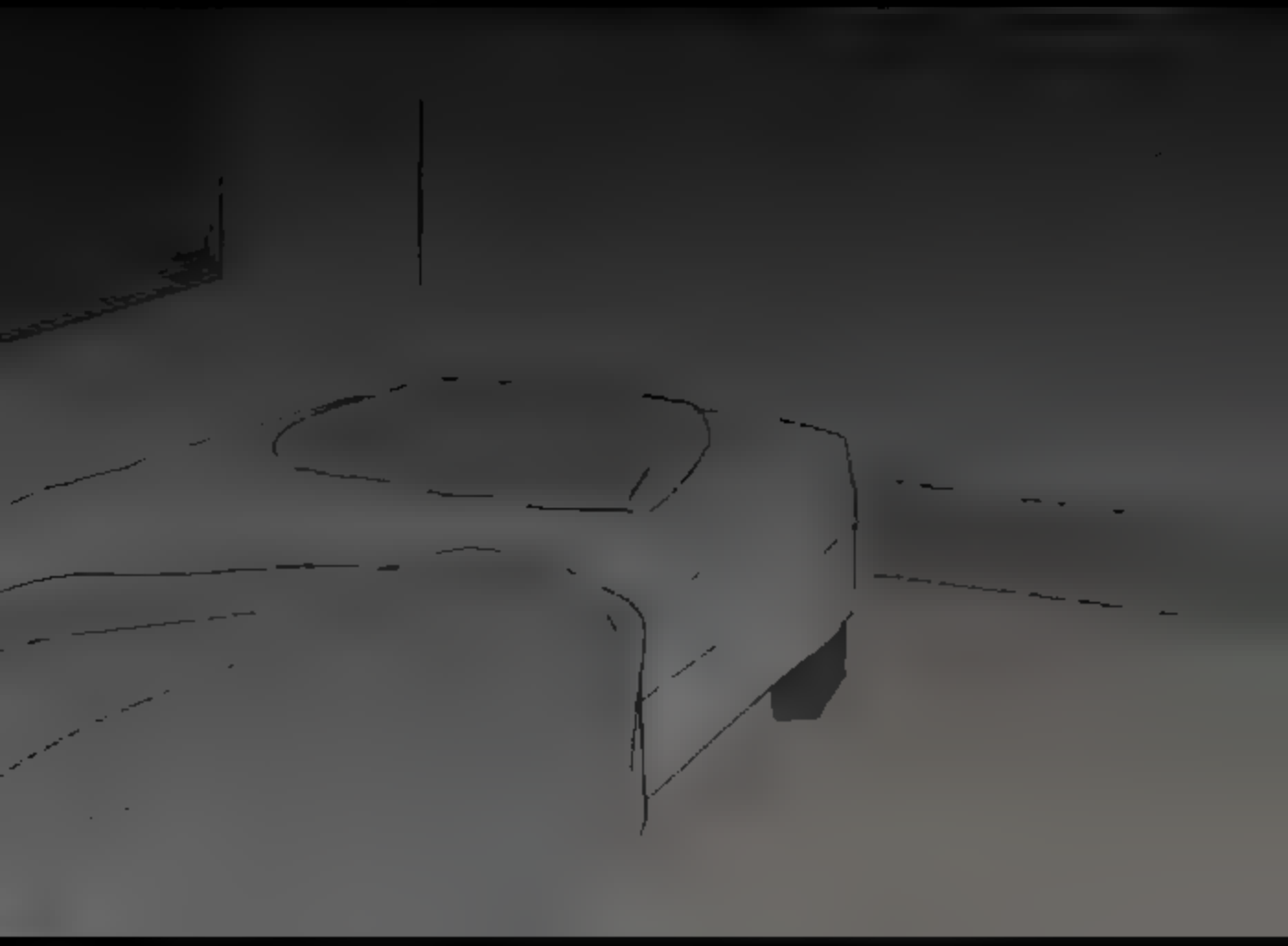
"THEY HUNTED AS THEY WANDERED
FROM PLACE TO PLACE, AND
WHEN THEY RAN OUT OF GAME TO HUNT,

THEY MOVED TO A DIFFERENT AREA,
REPEATING THIS PATTERN COUNTLESS TIMES."

"THEN THERE WAS A VERY WISE
AND FORWARD-THINKING HUNTER WHO
SUGGESTED THAT RATHER THAN WANDER
AROUND IN SEARCH OF FOOD,

WE SHOULD SETTLE DOWN
IN ONE AREA WHERE THE LAND IS FERTILE."

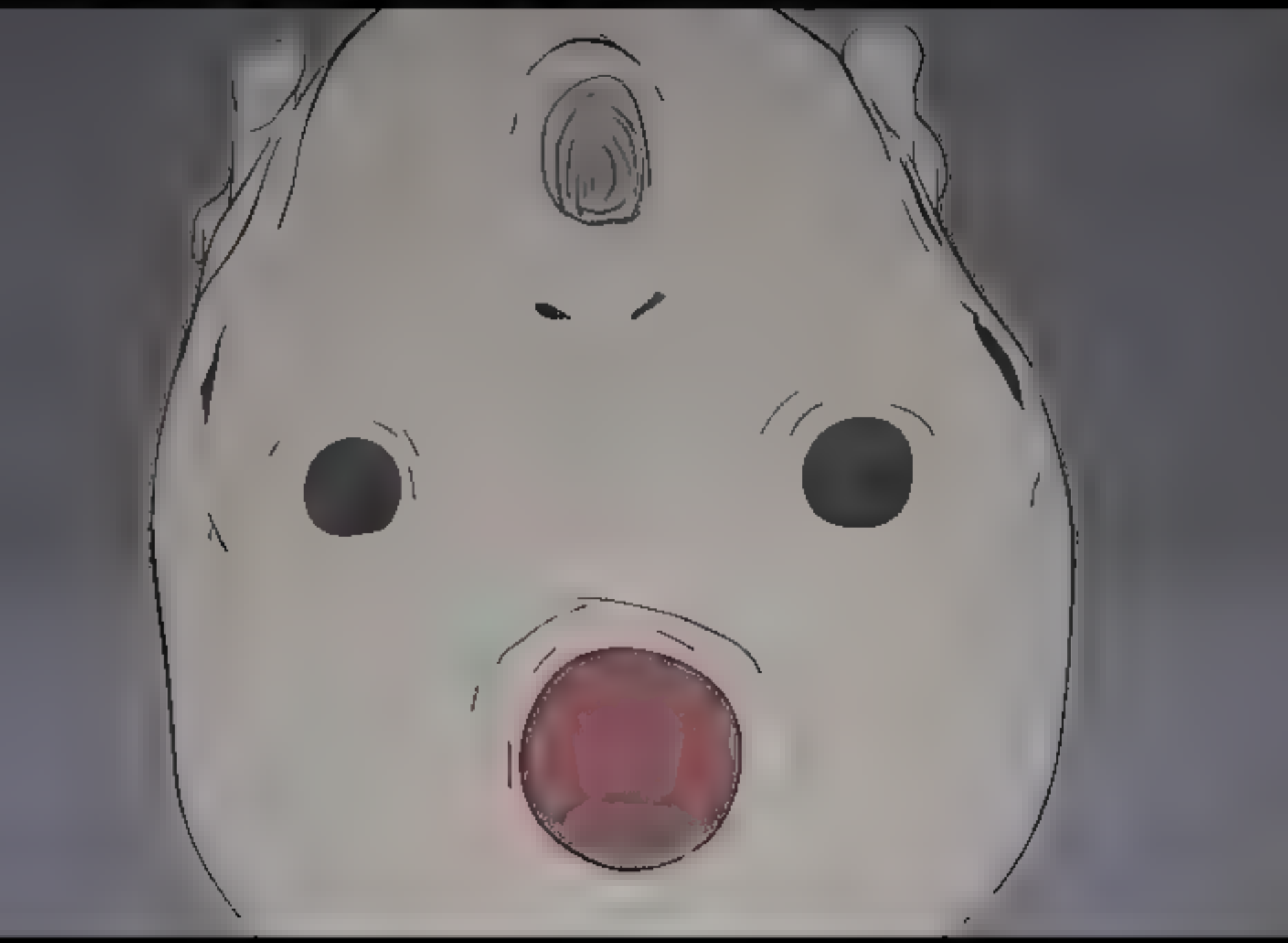
WHICH MEANS,

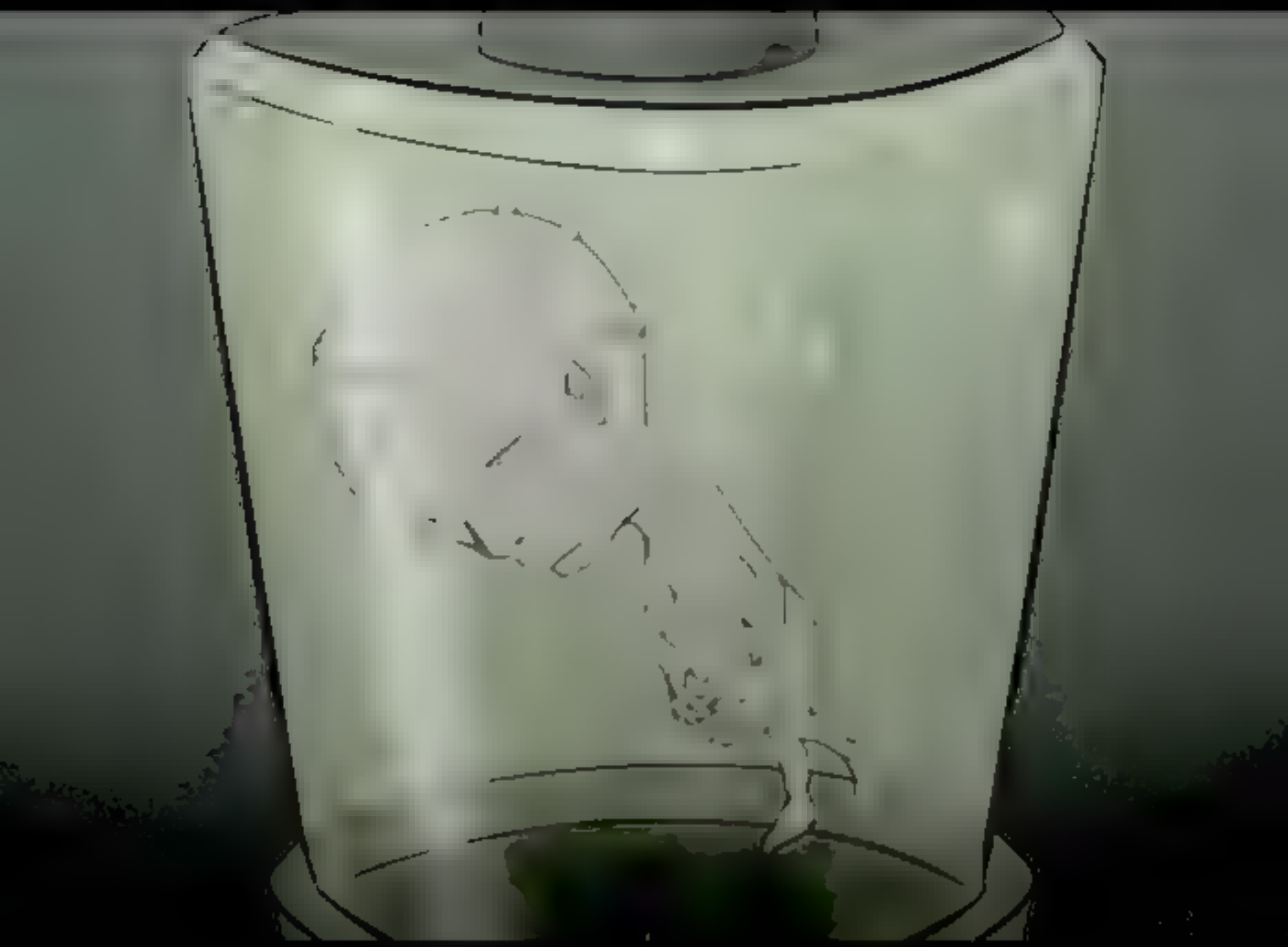


FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF
A SCIENTIST IN PURSUIT OF THE TRUTH,

"NOW, SO FAR WE'VE LEARNED ABOUT THE EVOLUTION AND REFINEMENT OF HUMANS."

"ALRIGHT, EVERYONE...."





"THEY CONTINUED TO BE IMPROVED FOR EASIER TRANSPORT AND STORAGE."

WH...

TO BE CONTINUED

THIS CONTENT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED
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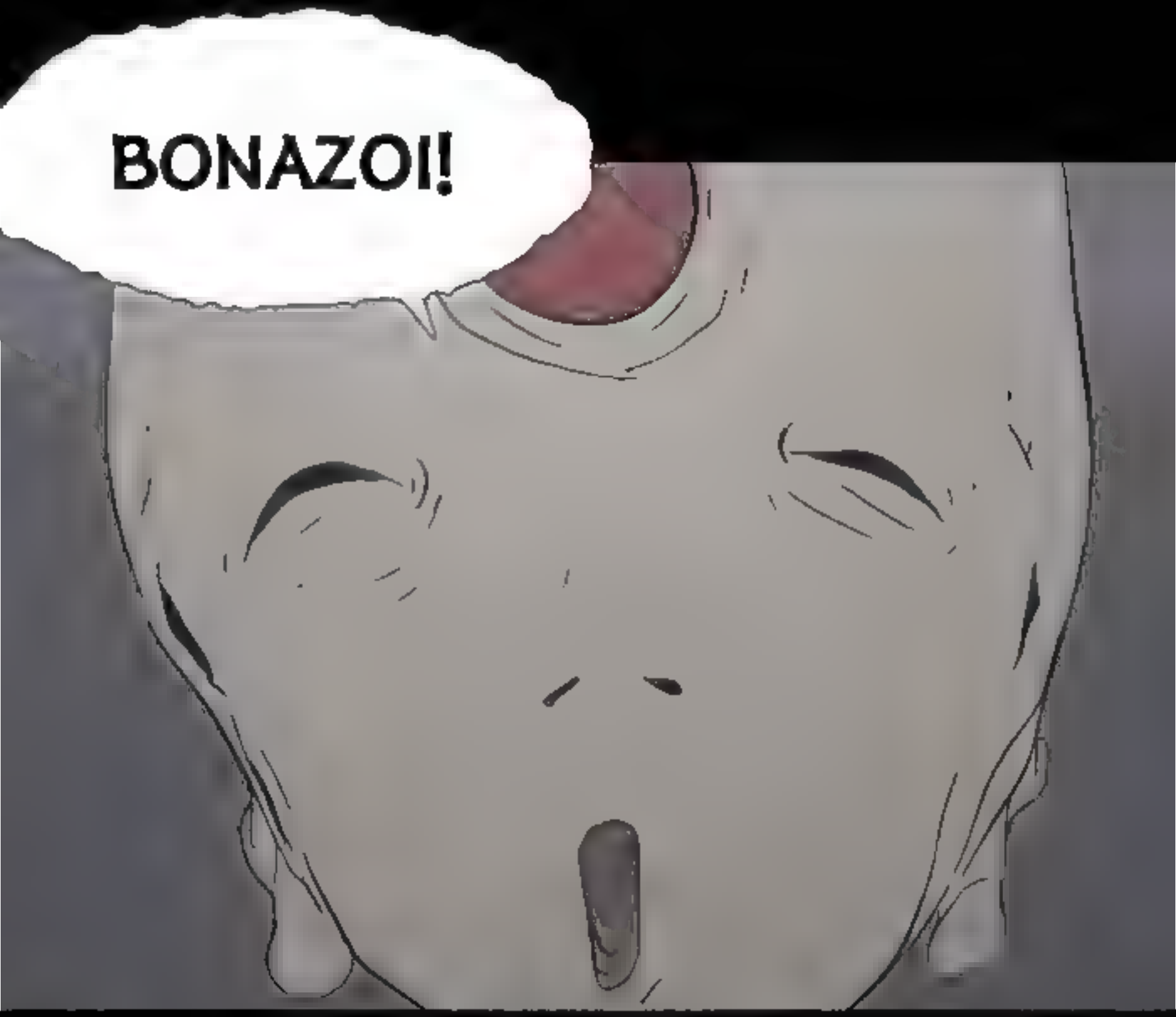
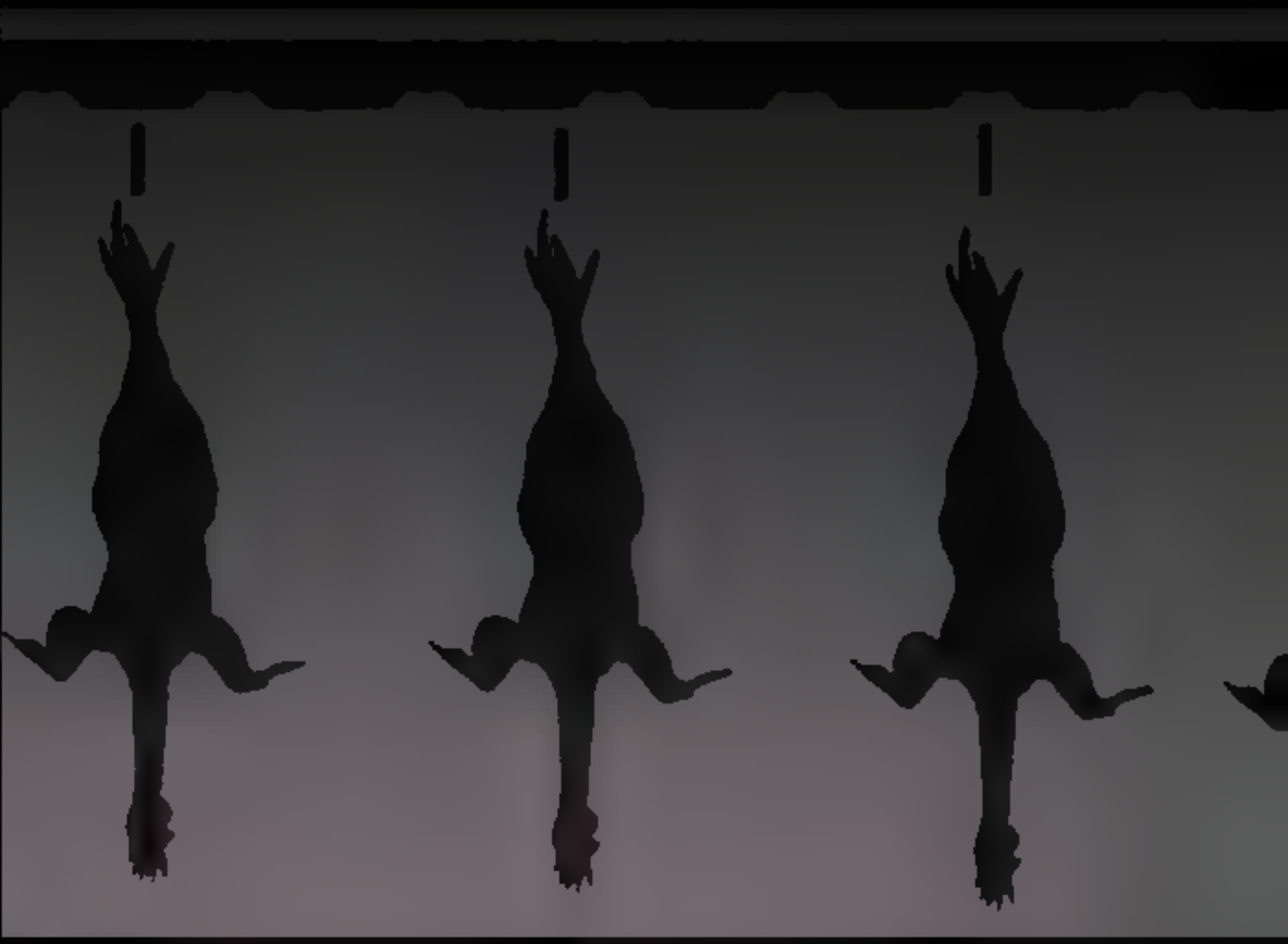


AFTER UTTERING THIS BRIEF EXCLAMATION
AND FLASHING A BRIGHT SMILE,

"AND THE FINAL, COMPLETED RESULT OF ALL THIS,"

"AFTER A PERIOD OF RESISTANCE
AND EVENTUAL CAPTURE,"

"A PERIOD OF QUANTITATIVE
AND QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENTS,"



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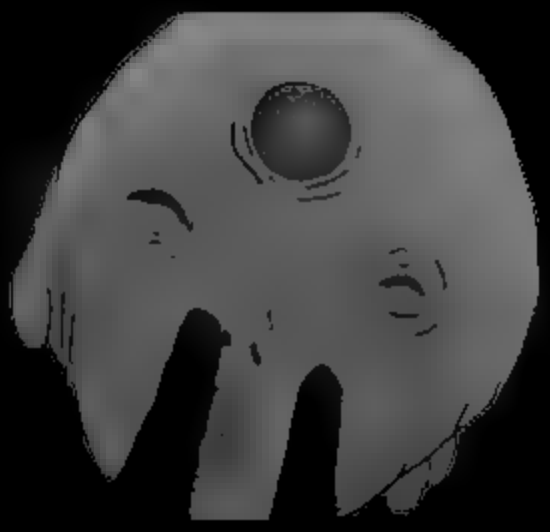
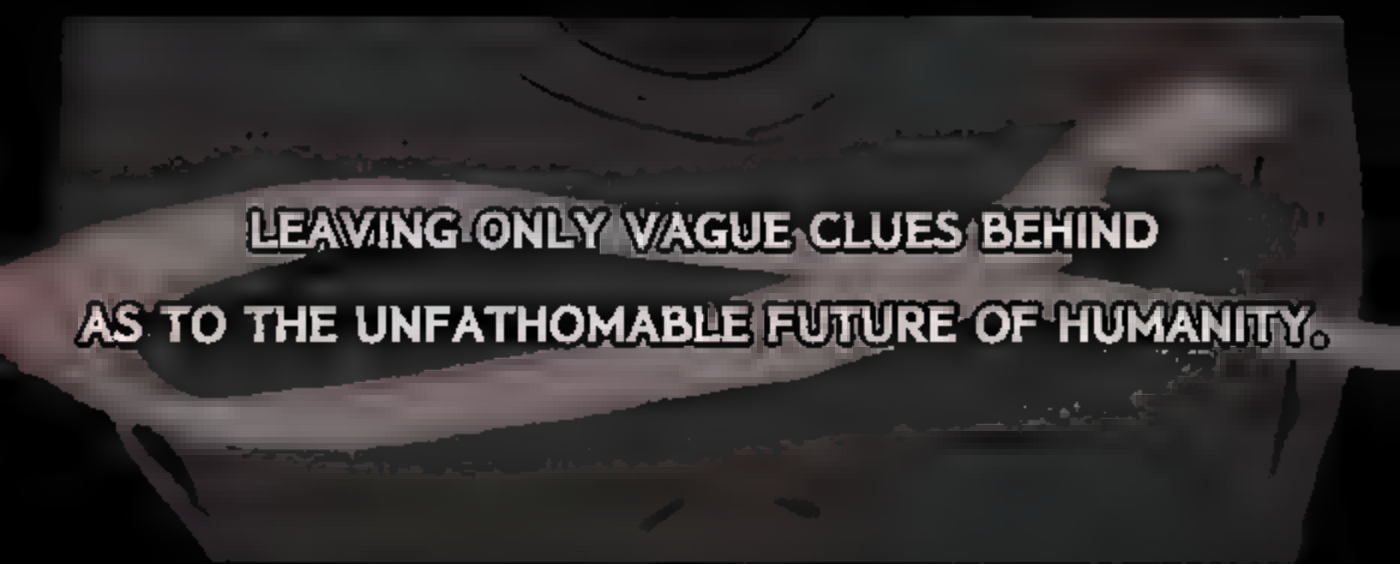
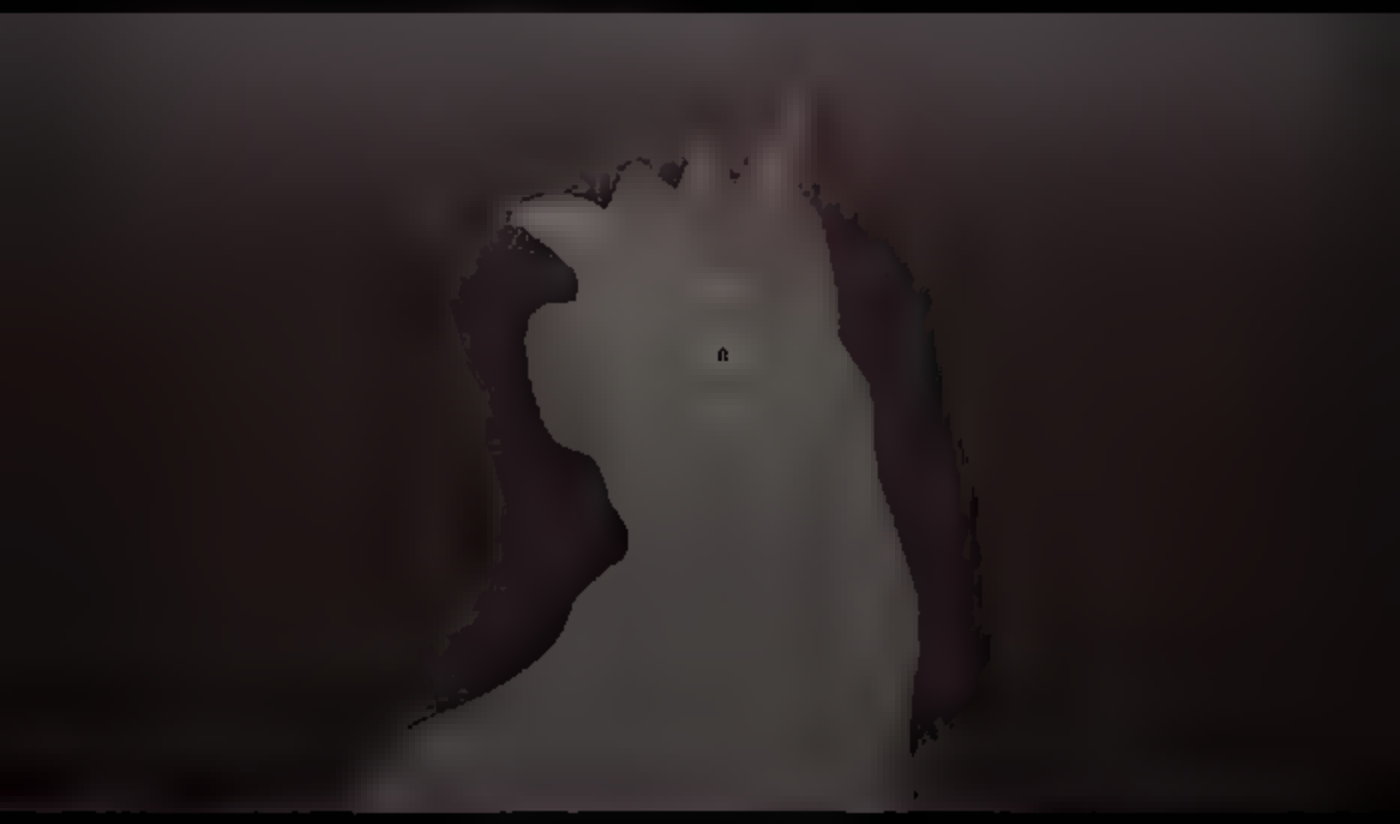


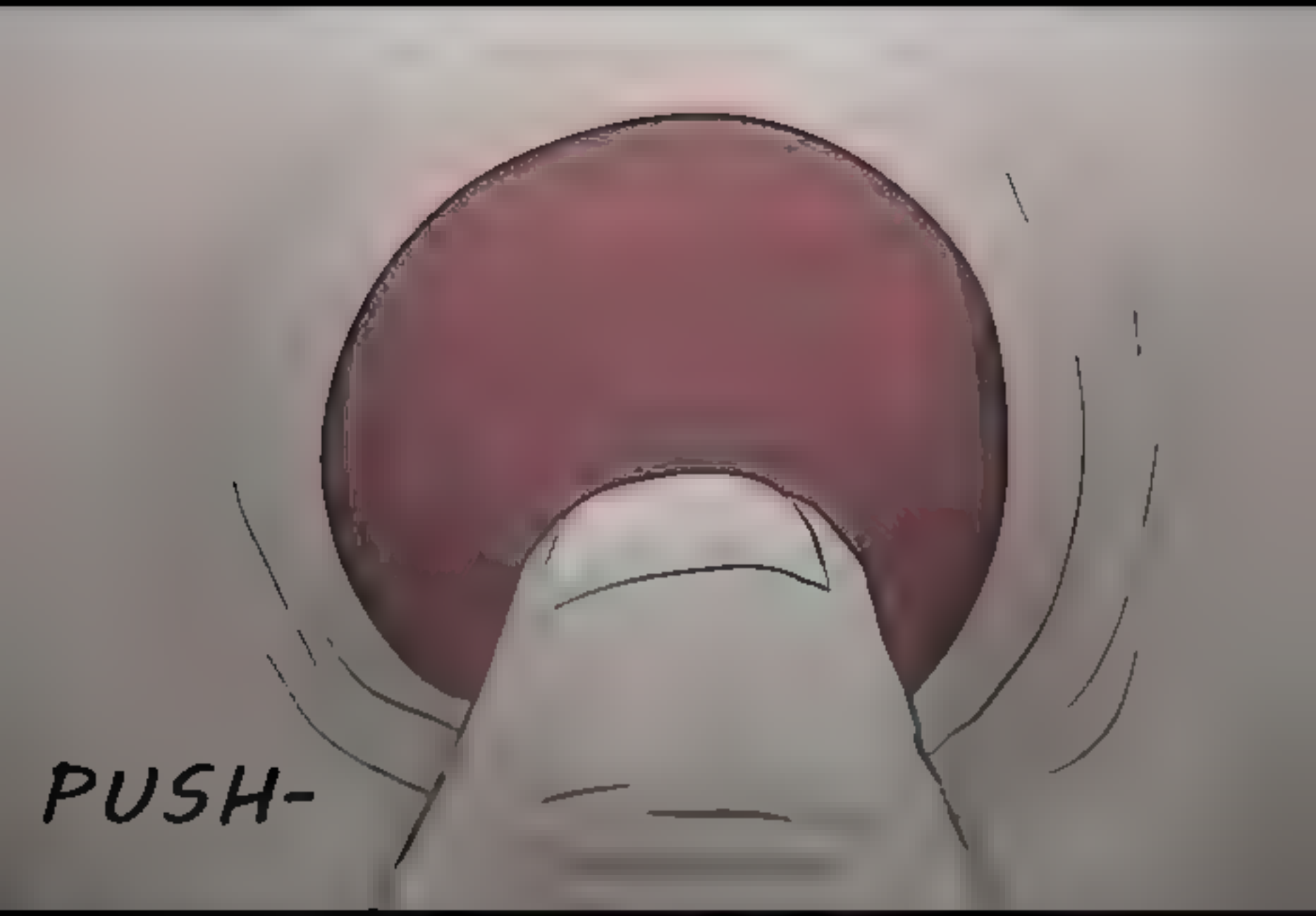
THERE IS A DISTINCT DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN EVOLUTION AND REFINEMENT.

THUS ALPHA DISAPPEARED



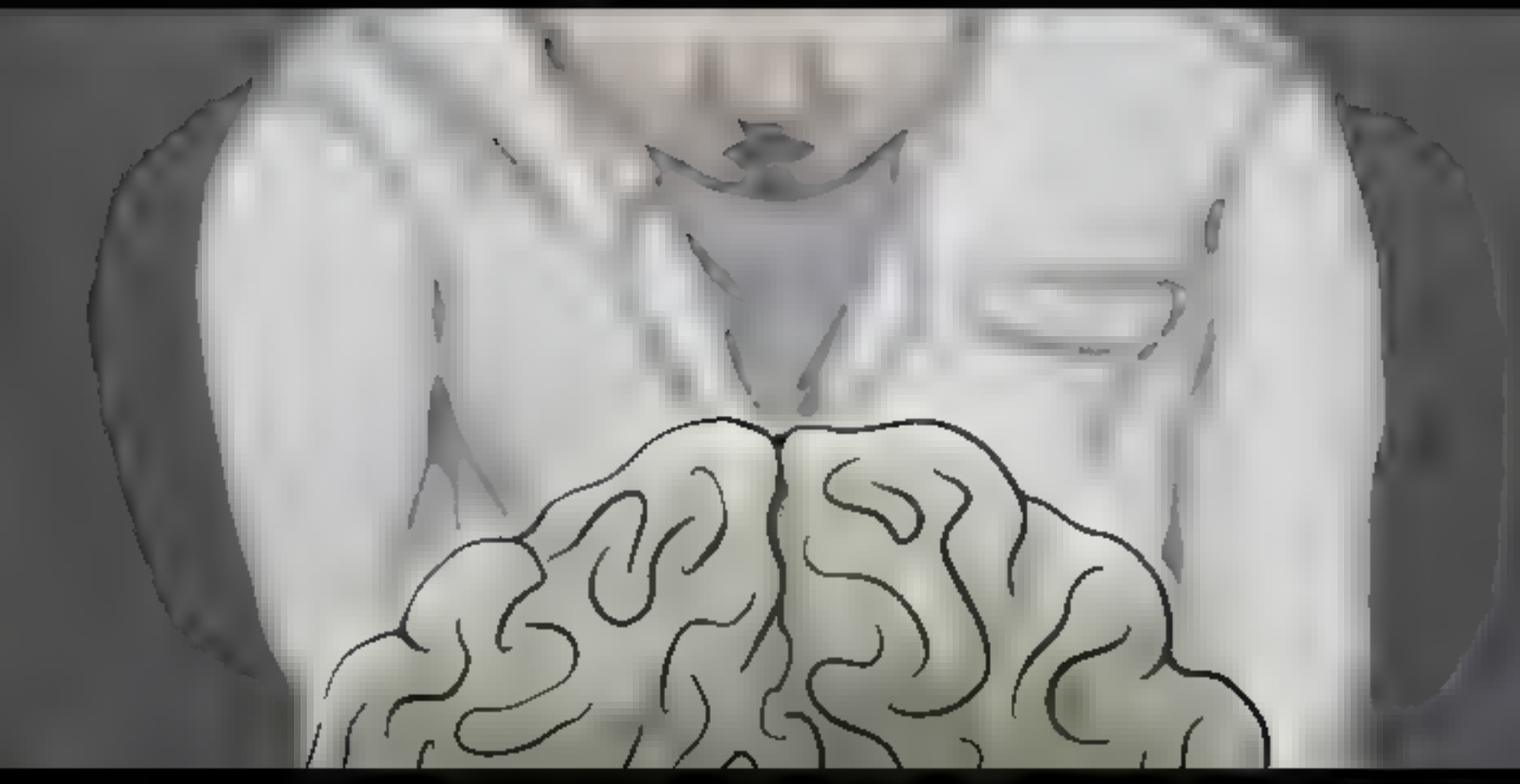


"THEY SCANNED SEVERAL GALAXIES
OVER MANY YEARS
BEFORE THEY FINALLY
DISCOVERED A PROTOPLANET
WHICH THEY COULD USE."



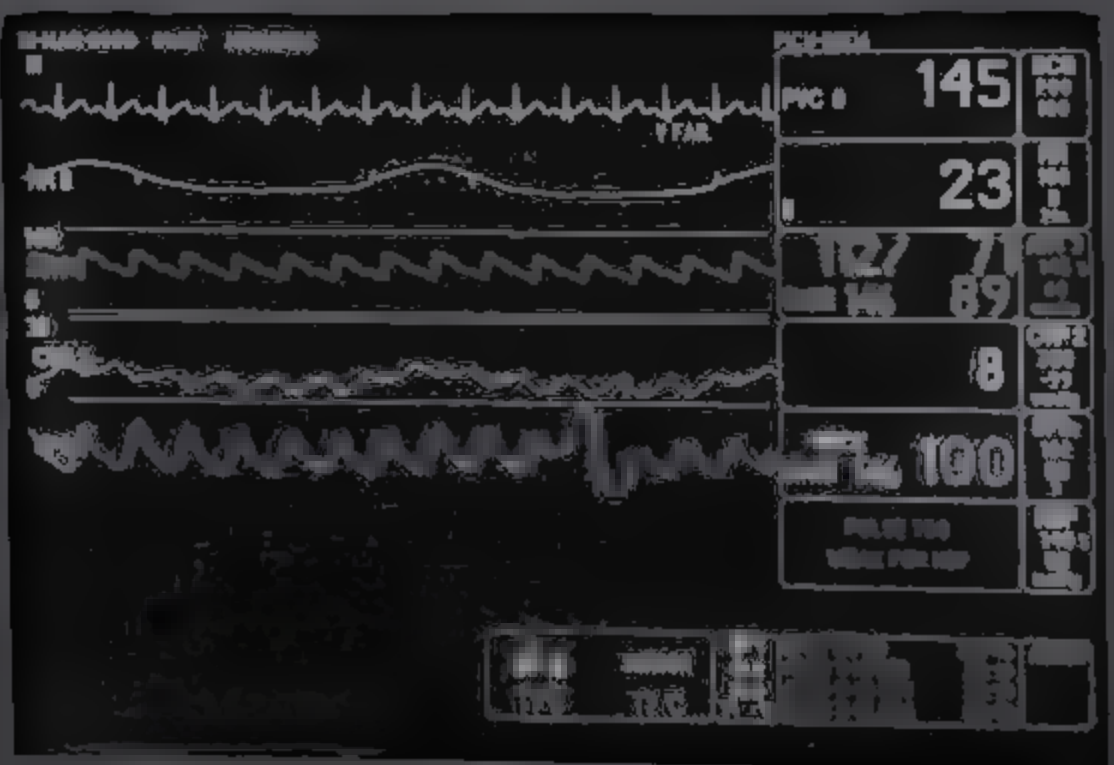
THE MOMENT THAT HIS FINGER
TOUCHED THE BUTTON

AND WHICH NO HUMAN, OR RATHER,
NO CREATURE CURRENTLY IN EXISTENCE
WAS KNOWN TO HAVE,



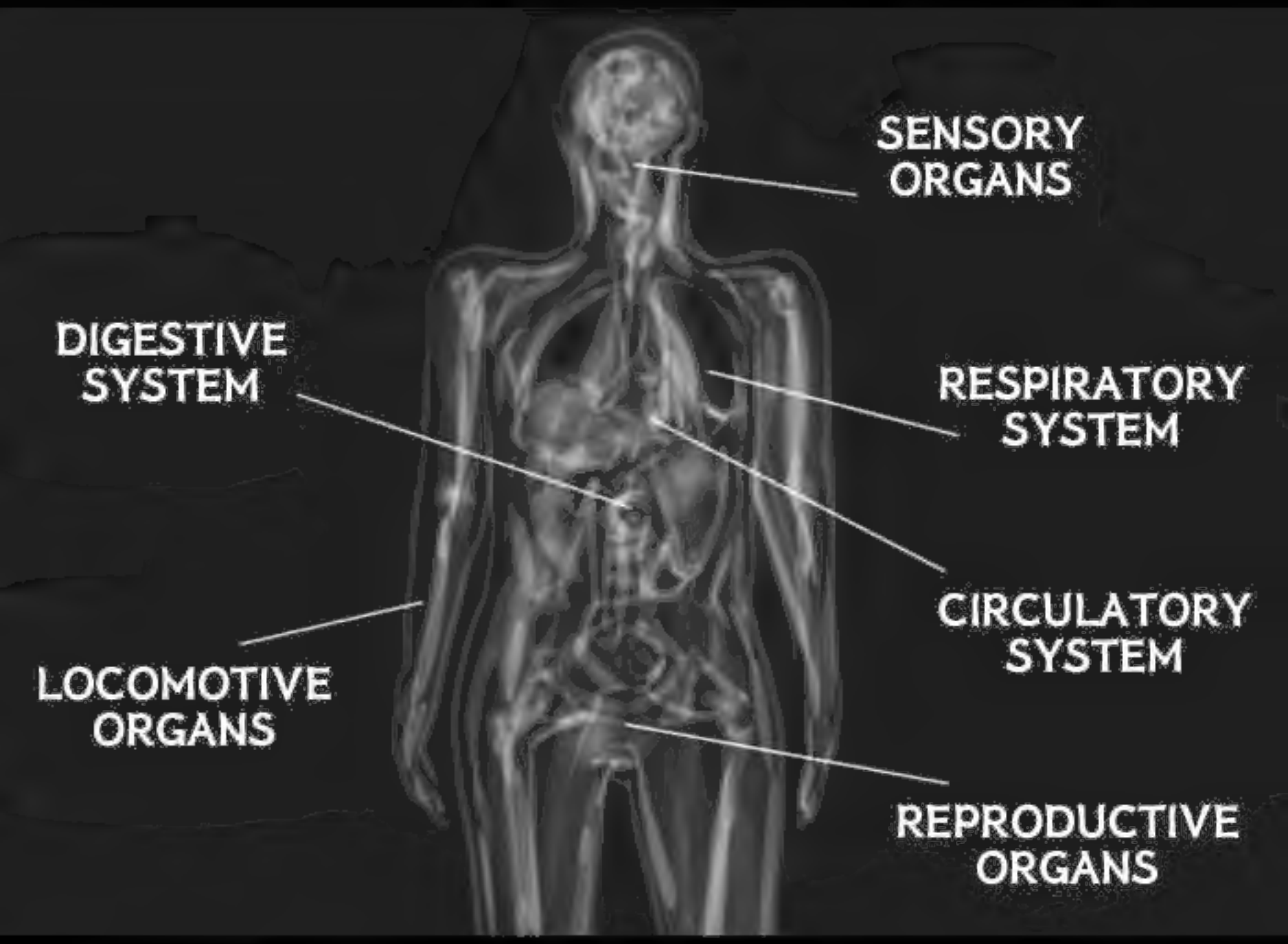
ALL OF THE ORGANS IN ALPHA'S BODY MELTED,
WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HIS BRAIN.

"AND SO THEY BEGAN
SEARCHING FOR A SUITABLE AREA
WHERE THEY COULD SETTLE DOWN
AND LIVE IN STABILITY."



EVEN THEN,
THE GRADUALLY DIMISHING SIGNS OF
ACTIVITY IN ALPHA'S BODY SUGGESTED

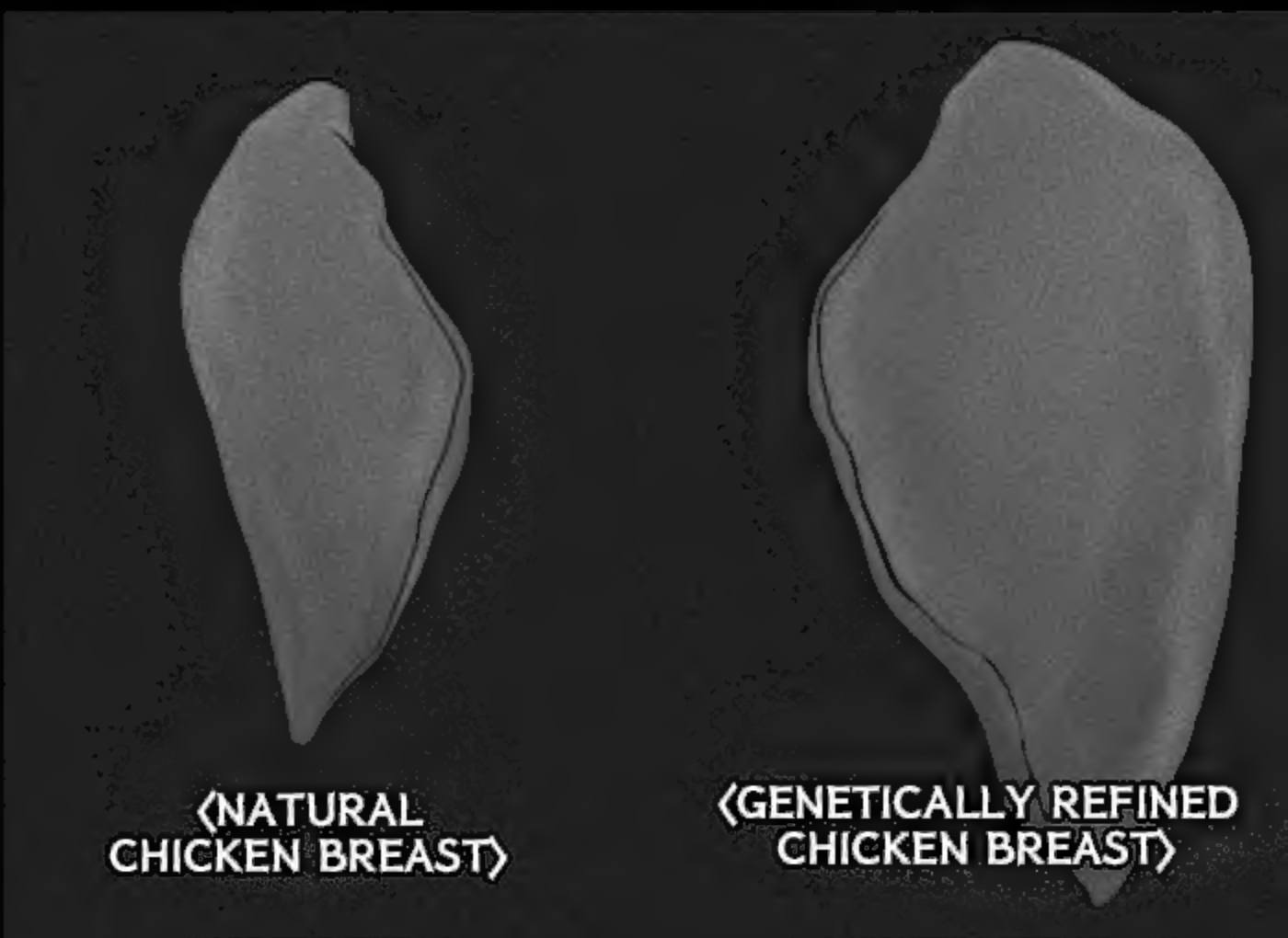
THAT HE WAS LIKELY
NOT FAR AWAY FROM A NATURAL DEATH.



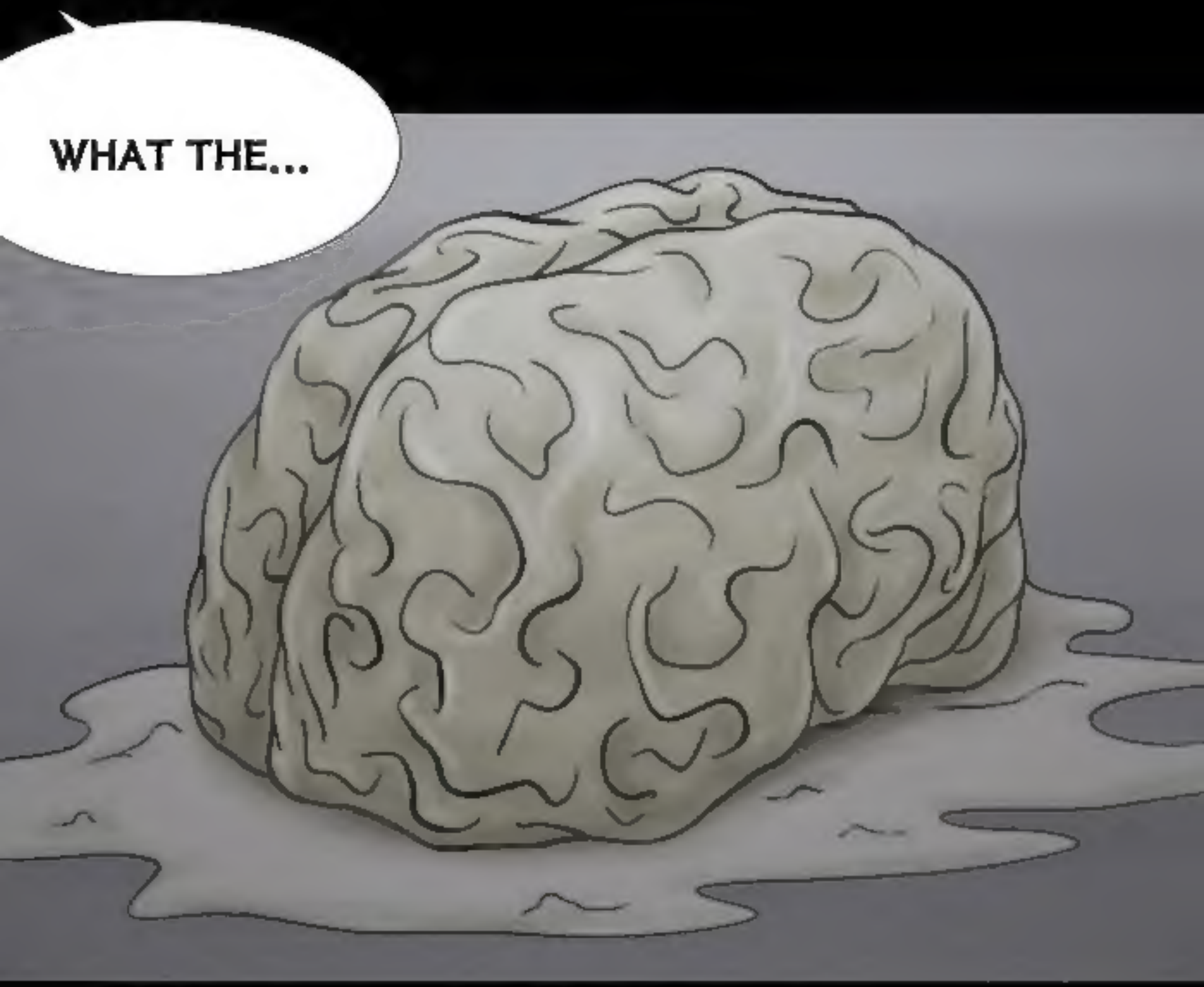
THE ONLY ORGAN WHICH CONTINUED TO DEVELOP
IN SPITE OF THIS ENDLESS PROCESS OF ATROPHY

WAS HIS BRAIN

WHAT GUARANTEE IS THERE THAT
THEY CAN EITHER DISTINGUISH OR PERCEIVE



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO?


WHAT THE...

THESE WERE ALL OF
THE INFERABLE FUTURES FOR HUMANITY